## California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

## Response to Question Related to the Status of Fisheries Posed during the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group Meeting on March 24-25, 2010

May 12, 2010

One science question about the status of fisheries was posed during the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group meeting on March 24-25, 2010. The California Department of Fish and Game presented information to respond to this question during the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) meeting on November 12-13, 2009 and a summary is provided below.

## What is the current condition of rockfish today?

Response (from the California Department of Fish and Game): Understanding the relationship between the health of fish stocks and the role of the MLPA is frequently raised as a concern. It is important to recognize that the MLPA was established as one tool to act in conjunction with the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) to protect and conserve California's unique marine ecosystem and marine resources. The MLPA is designed to protect ecosystem structure and function while helping to sustain, conserve, and rebuild depleted populations by working in concert with the MLMA and Nearshore Fisheries Management Plan. To better describe the relationship between the MLPA and fishery management, the California Department of Fish and Game presented a guidance document to the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force at its November 12-13, 2009 meeting; this document provides information on existing fisheries management in relation to the development of alternative MPA proposals for the MLPA Initiative and can be accessed on the Internet at <a href="http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentVersionID=29643">http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentVersionID=29643</a>.

To address the question regarding the current condition of rockfish, section 3.2.1 of the north coast regional profile provides information on depleted and overfished species, including some rockfish species. Additionally, in 2009, the Pacific Fishery Management Council adopted new rebuilding analyses for seven rockfish species, listed below, that are or were previously, designated as "overfished" (less than 25% of their unexploited spawning population size remains). These new analyses indicate that all seven species are rebuilding. Bocaccio, cowcod, darkblotched rockfish, and widow rockfish are rebuilding faster than anticipated, while yelloweye rockfish, canary rockfish, and Pacific ocean perch are behind schedule under their current rebuilding plans. Additionally, species currently managed under "precautionary zone measures" include blue rockfish, Pacific whiting, cabezon, sablefish and petrale sole.

More information on the status of recently assessed nearshore stocks can be found on the California Department of Fish and Game website at <a href="http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/fforum2009.asp#finfish">http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/fforum2009.asp#finfish</a> and information on current groundfish management can be found at <a href="http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/groundfishcentral/index.asp">http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/groundfishcentral/index.asp</a>. Additional information on the stock assessment of groundfish species managed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council can be found at <a href="http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/stock-assessments/">http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/stock-assessments/</a>.